

Establishing how Bacterial Cells Position the Division Site

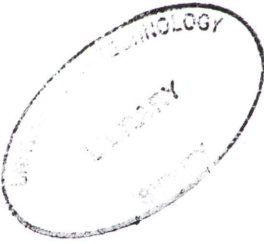
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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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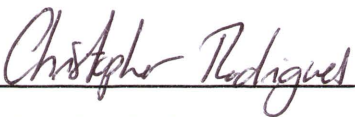


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I also certify that the written preparation of the thesis, and all experimental work associated with it has been carried out solely by me, unless otherwise indicated.

Finally, I certify that all information sources and literature used are acknowledged in the text.



Christopher Rodrigues, January 2011

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Contents

Certificate of Authorship/Originality i

Acknowledgements..... ii

Contents iv

Table of Figures and Tables..... xi

Publications..... xiv

Abbreviations xvi

Abstract..... xix

Chapter 1 - Introduction 1

 Preface..... 2

 1.1 *Bacillus subtilis*: a model organism 3

 1.1.1 Sporulation and the spore outgrowth system 3

 1.2 DNA replication..... 5

 1.2.1 Initiation of DNA replication..... 5

 1.2.2 DNA chain elongation 7

 1.2.3 Termination of DNA replication 9

 1.3 Chromosome segregation 10

 1.4 Cell division 13

 1.4.1 The FtsZ protein..... 13

 1.4.2 FtsZ biochemistry and the Z ring 14

 1.4.3 Cellular localization of Z ring assembly..... 18

 1.4.4 The divisome: FtsZ accessory proteins..... 21

 1.5 Regulation of cell division 22

 1.5.1 The Min system..... 23

 1.5.1.1 The Min system of *E. coli*..... 24

 1.5.1.2 The Min system of *B. subtilis* 26

 1.5.1.3 An emerging view of the *B. subtilis* Min system 27

 1.5.2 Nucleoid occlusion 29

 1.5.2.1 The Transertion hypothesis..... 29

iv

1.5.2.2 Nucleoid occlusion proteins.....	30
1.5.2.3 The role of relief of nucleoid occlusion in midcell Z ring positioning.....	33
1.6 The coordination between DNA replication and cell division.....	35
1.6.1 A link between the early stages of DNA replication and cell division in <i>Bacillus subtilis</i>	35
1.7 Regulation of Z ring assembly as a result of DNA-damage related stress: the SOS response	39
1.8 Regulation of cell division in <i>Caulobacter crescentus</i>.....	40
1.9 Thesis aims	42
 Chapter 2 - Material and Methods	 44
2.1 Chemicals, reagents and solutions	45
2.2 <i>B. subtilis</i> strains and growth conditions.....	45
2.2.1 Testing the status of the <i>amyE</i> locus of <i>B. subtilis</i>	48
2.2.2 Testing for thymine auxotrophy	49
2.2.3 Testing for temperature-sensitive DNA replication mutations.....	49
2.2.4 Testing for UV sensitivity and growth of UV-sensitive strains	50
2.2.5 Determining cell viability	50
2.2.6 Depletion of the P _{spac} inducible promoter	51
2.3 Preparation of competent <i>B. subtilis</i> cells and transformation...	51
2.3.1 Transformation of competent <i>B. subtilis</i> cells.....	52
2.3.1.1 Transformation of competent <i>B. subtilis</i> cells by congression.....	52
2.4 Preparation, germination and outgrowth of <i>B. subtilis</i> spores ...	53
2.5 General DNA methods	53
2.5.1 Purification of chromosomal DNA from <i>B. subtilis</i>	53
2.5.2 Agarose gel electrophoresis of DNA	54
2.5.3 Determination of DNA concentration	54
2.5.4 Polymerase chain reaction (PCR).....	54
2.5.5 DNA sequencing	56
2.6 Microscopy methods.....	56

2.6.1 Immunofluorescence microscopy (IFM)	56
2.6.2 Ethanol fixation of cells.....	57
2.6.3 Methanol fixation for nucleoid visualisation.....	58
2.6.4 Preparation of cells for live cell fluorescence microscopy	58
2.6.5 Phase-contrast and fluorescence microscopy.....	59
2.6.6 Cell scoring and statistics.....	59
2.7 Western blot analysis.....	60
2.7.1 Whole cell protein extraction for Western blotting	60
2.7.2 Denaturing SDS-polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis (SDS-PAGE) of proteins	60
2.7.3 Western transfer.....	61
2.7.4 Immunodetection and quantification	61
2.8 Suppliers of chemicals, reagents and equipment.....	62

**Chapter 3 - Investigating the Link between the Early Stages
of DNA Replication and Z ring positioning.....64**

3.1 Introduction.....	65
3.1.1 Early studies examining the link between cell division and DNA replication.....	65
3.1.2 The identification of <i>dnaF133</i> : a DNA replication initiation mutant that allows Z ring assembly at midcell	67
3.1.3 Chapter aims.....	68
3.2. Results	70
3.2.1 Midcell Z rings form preferentially over unreplicated bilobed nucleoids in the DNA replication initiation mutant <i>dnaF133</i>	70
3.2.1.1 Characterization of Z ring positioning in live cells of <i>dna-1</i> and <i>dnaF133</i> at the non-permissive temperature.....	70
3.2.1.2 Characterization of unreplicated nucleoid morphologies in live cells of <i>dna-1</i> and <i>dnaF133</i> at the non-permissive temperature.....	74
3.2.1.3 Co-visualization of the Z ring and unreplicated nucleoids in live cells of <i>dna-1</i> and <i>dnaF133</i> at the non-permissive temperature.....	76

3.2.1.4 Characterization of unreplicated nucleoid morphologies at an earlier time point before the bulk of Z ring formation.....	79
3.2.2 Midcell Z rings also form over bilobed nucleoids when entry into DNA chain elongation is blocked.....	80
3.2.2.1 Characterization of unreplicated nucleoid morphologies in fixed cells when entry into DNA chain elongation is blocked	80
3.2.2.2 Co-visualization of the Z ring and unreplicated nucleoids in live cells when entry into DNA chain elongation is blocked	82
3.2.3 In the absence of <i>noc</i>, midcell Z ring frequency increases to varying degrees, depending on the type of DNA replication block	86
3.2.3.1 Z ring positioning in the absence of <i>noc</i> when DNA replication initiation is blocked	86
3.2.3.2 Z ring positioning in the absence of <i>noc</i> when DNA chain elongation is blocked..	88
3.2.3.3 Co-visualization of the Z ring and unreplicated nucleoids in live cells in the absence of <i>noc</i>	89
3.3 Discussion	94
3.3.1 Why do unreplicated nucleoids form bilobed nucleoids?.....	94
3.3.2 Why do Z rings form preferentially over bilobed nucleoids when <i>noc</i> is present, except in the <i>dna-1</i> mutant?.....	95
3.3.3 Does chromosome organization affect Z ring positioning when the early stages of DNA replication are blocked?	96
3.3.4 Why do multiple helical FtsZ patterns form when DNA replication is inhibited at the non-permissive temperature using <i>dna-1</i> and <i>dnaF133</i> ?	98
3.3.5 Linking the early stages of DNA replication to midcell Z ring assembly: the “Ready-Set-Go” model	99
3.3.5.1 How does “potentiation” occur?	102
Chapter 4 - Reinvestigating the Noc/Min system double mutant defect	106
4.1 Introduction	107
4.1.1 Chapter aims.....	109
4.2 Results.....	111
4.2.1 Noc and MinCD are not required for midcell Z ring positioning.....	111

4.2.1.1 Characterization of the <i>noc minCD</i> double mutant during vegetative growth	112
4.2.1.2 Double mutant Z ring positioning in outgrown spores using IFM.....	114
4.2.2 The absence of <i>noc</i> and <i>minCD</i> affects the efficient utilization of division sites.....	117
4.2.2.1 Characterization of the <i>noc minCD</i> double mutant when FtsZ is overproduced during vegetative growth	118
a) Native FtsZ overproduction in the double mutant during vegetative growth...	119
b) FtsZ-YFP overproduction in the double mutant during vegetative growth.....	121
4.2.2.2 FtsZ overproduction in the double mutant during spore outgrowth partially rescues the efficiency and timing of Z ring assembly at midcell.....	125
4.2.2.3 Double mutant Z ring positioning in live cells overproducing FtsZ-YFP during spore outgrowth	127
4.2.2.4 Effects of the temperature and media on the double mutant cell length	130
4.3 Discussion.....	134
4.3.1 A role for Noc and the Min system in the cell cycle: coupling efficient midcell Z ring assembly to a round of DNA replication/segregation	135
4.3.1.1 Molecular insight into the role of Noc and the Min system in ensuring efficient Z ring assembly at midcell	138
4.3.1.2 A new model for the role of Noc and the Min system in the cell cycle	140
4.3.2 If the Min system and Noc do not position the Z ring at midcell, what other factors play this role?.....	142
 Chapter 5 - Investigating the role of nucleoid occlusion in midcell Z ring positioning	145
5.1 Introduction.....	146
5.1.1 The role nucleoid occlusion in midcell Z ring positioning.....	146
5.1.2 Working hypotheses	148
5.1.3 Chapter Aims.....	149
5.2 Results	151
5.2.1 Z ring positioning at midcell is independent of nucleoid occlusion and the Min system	151
5.2.1.1 Experimental approach I: addition of HPUra to prevent DNA replication in <i>recA</i> -deleted cells	151
a) Obtaining RecA ⁻ strains.....	152

b) Optimizing the conditions of the experimental approach and controls	154
5.2.1.2 Z ring position relative to nucleoids in fixed cells with two separated nucleoids	160
5.2.1.3 Z ring precision between two separated nucleoids in fixed cells	162
5.2.2 An alternative approach demonstrating Nucleoid occlusion and Min system independent Z ring positioning at midcell.....	165
5.2.2.1 Experimental approach II: using a DNA replication mutant to prevent DNA replication	165
a) Obtaining strains for the experimental approach II	166
b) Optimizing the conditions of experimental approach II and controls	168
5.2.2.2 Z ring localization in live cells with two separated nucleoids.....	172
5.2.2.3 Z ring precision between two separated nucleoids in live cells	175
5.3.3 Z ring positioning does not correlate with the amount of relief of nucleoid occlusion at midcell.....	178
5.3.3.1 Correlating Z ring positioning with internucleoid distance in live cells with a single Z ring between two separated nucleoids	178
5.3.4 The Min system is required for midcell Z ring assembly when the very early stages of DNA replication are blocked.....	180
5.3.4.1 Live Z ring positioning when the initiation of the first round of replication is blocked.....	180
5.3.4.2 Live Z ring positioning when DNA chain elongation is blocked.....	182
5.4 Discussion	185
5.4.1 A signal for midcell Z ring assembly	186
5.4.2 A role for Noc and the Min system in promoting efficient midcell Z ring assembly between separated nucleoids.....	189
5.4.3 What prevents midcell Z ring assembly when the very early stages of DNA replication are blocked in the absence of <i>minCD</i> ?	191
5.4.4 Is chromosome segregation activity required for midcell Z ring assembly in the absence of <i>noc</i> and <i>minCD</i> ?	193
Chapter 6 - General Discussion.....	195
6.1 Z ring position is linked to replisome assembly at <i>oriC</i>	196
6.2 A new role for Noc and the Min system in the cell cycle	198

6.3 A mechanism independent of nucleoid occlusion and the Min system defining the location of division sites..... 200

6.4. Insight into other mechanisms preventing Z ring assembly at midcell 202

6.5 Concluding remarks and Future work 203

Appendices..... 205

Appendix I 206

Appendix II..... 208

Appendix III 211

References..... 214

Table of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1.1: The cell cycle of *B. subtilis*.4

Figure 1.2: Steps in the DNA replication initiation of *B. subtilis* at *oriC*.6

Figure 1.3: Simplified model of the *B. subtilis* replication fork.8

Figure 1.4: FtsZ localization in the form of Z rings. 15

Figure 1.5: FtsZ polymerization and the formation of the Z ring. 17

Figure 1.6: Visualisation of FtsZ helices using FtsZ-YFP as marker for FtsZ localization in outgrown spores of *B. subtilis*.20

Figure 1.7: Recruitment of divisome components to the septal ring in *E. coli* and *B. subtilis*.22

Figure 1.8: Comparison between the *B. subtilis* and *E. coli* Min system.25

Figure 1.9: Prevailing view of division site placement in *B. subtilis* and *E. coli* - positioning the Z ring through the combined action of the Min system and nucleoid occlusion.33

Figure 1.10: Checkpoint model linking DNA replication to cell division.38

Figure 3.1: Z ring positioning in live outgrown spores of *dna-1* and *dnaF133* at the non-permissive temperature.72

Figure 3.2: Nucleoid morphology in live and methanol-fixed DAPI-stained outgrown spores of *dna-1* and *dnaF133*.75

Figure 3.3: Co-visualization of the Z ring and nucleoids in *dna-1* and *dnaF133* live outgrown spores...78

Figure 3.4: Nucleoid morphology in *dna-1* and *dnaF133* methanol-fixed DAPI-stained outgrown spores.80

Figure 3.6: Z ring positioning when entry into DNA chain elongation is blocked during spore outgrowth in the thymineless and +HPUra conditions.83

Figure 3.7: Co-visualization of the Z ring and nucleoids in when entry into chain elongation is blocked during spore outgrowth.85

Figure 3.8: Z ring positioning in the absence of *noc* when DNA replication initiation is blocked.88

Figure 3.9: Z ring positioning in the absence of *noc* when entry into DNA chain elongation is blocked during spore outgrowth.89

Figure 3.10: Co-visualization of the Z ring and nucleoids in *noc*-deleted *dna-1* active or +HPUra treated outgrown spores.92

Figure 3.11: Linking DNA replication with Z ring positioning: the ‘Ready-Set-Go’ model. 101

Figure 4.1: Mean cell length and IFM images of vegetatively-growing wild-type, *minCD* mutant and *noc minCD* double mutant cells at 30°C. 112

Figure 4.2: Spore outgrowth of the *noc minCD* double mutant. 115

Figure 4.3: Z ring positioning at the midcell division site in wild-type and *noc minCD* double mutant outgrown spores. 117

Figure 4.4: Mean cell length and IFM images of wild-type and *noc minCD* double mutant vegetatively-growing cells when FtsZ is overproduced. 120

Figure 4.5: Western analysis of FtsZ levels in the wild-type and *noc minCD* double mutant vegetatively-growing cells overproducing FtsZ. 121

Figure 4.6: Mean cell lengths and representative images of wild-type and *noc minCD* double mutant vegetatively-growing cells when FtsZ-YFP is overproduced. 123

Figure 4.7: Western analysis of FtsZ-YFP and native FtsZ levels in the *noc minCD* double mutant and the wild-type vegetatively-growing cells. 124

Figure 4.8: FtsZ overproduction improves the efficiency and timing of Z ring assembly in the *noc minCD* double mutant during the first cell cycle following spore germination. 126

Figure 4.9: Live Z ring positioning in the *noc minCD* double mutant and wild-type outgrown spores overproducing FtsZ-YFP. 129

Figure 4.10: Effect of the growth media and temperature on the cell length distribution of wild-type and *noc minCD* double mutant. 132

Figure 4.11: FtsZ localization in the *noc minCD* double mutant at the 37°C in PAB. 133

Figure 4.12: A model redefining the roles of Noc and the Min system during the cell cycle. 141

Figure 5.1: Depletion of FtsZ results in inhibition of cell division 152

Figure 5.2: FtsZ localization in the presence or absence of IPTG during spore outgrowth 155

Figure 5.3: Representative images of nucleoid segregation patterns observed in methanol-fixed DAPI-stained nucleoids, after HPUra addition at 150 min of spore outgrowth. 156

Figure 5.4: Representative images of outgrown spores with two separated nucleoids after the addition of HPUra. 158

Figure 5.5: Optimized experimental approach I. 159

Figure 5.6: FtsZ localization in fixed outgrown spores in the absence of IPTG. 159

Figure 5.7: Representative images of Z ring localization in cells prepared for IFM with a single Z ring and two separated nucleoids at 210 and 240 min of experimental approach I. 160

Figure 5.8: Z ring positioning in outgrown spores with a single Z ring between two separated nucleoids at 210 and 240 min of experimental approach I. 164

Figure 5.9: *B. subtilis* strain SU661 contains the *dna-1* mutation and is temperature-sensitive for DNA replication. 167

Figure 5.10: Representative images of nucleoid segregation patterns in live DAPI-stained nucleoids 30 min after the temperature shift to the non-permissive temperature. 169

Figure 5.11: Representative images of outgrown spores with two separated nucleoids at the 135 min of experimental approach II. 171

Figure 5.12: Diagram of experimental approach II. 171

Figure 5.13: FtsZ localization in the presence or absence of IPTG and xylose during spore outgrowth. 172

Figure 5.14: Representative images of Z ring and nucleoids in cells with two nucleoids at the 165 min time point of experimental approach II	173
Figure 5.15: Z ring positioning in live outgrown spores with a single Z ring between two separated nucleoids at 165 min of experimental approach II	177
Figure 5.16: Relationship between Z ring positioning and internucleoid distance in live outgrown spores with a Z ring between two separated nucleoids at 165 min of experimental approach II.....	179
Figure 5.17: Live Z ring positioning in outgrown spores when initiation of DNA replication is blocked at the level of DnaB.....	181
Figure 5.18: Live Z ring positioning in outgrown spores when the elongation phase of DNA replication is blocked by omitting thymine from the medium (thymineless condition).	183

Tables

Table 1.1: Comparison of the <i>B. subtilis</i> and <i>E. coli</i> proteins involved in chromosomal DNA replication.	8
Table 2.1: Commonly used aqueous buffers and solutions	45
Table 2.2: <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> strains.....	46
Table 2.3: <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> growth media	48
Table 2.4: Antibiotics used for selection of <i>B. subtilis</i>	48
Table 2.5: Primers used for PCR reactions.....	55
Table 2.6: Antibodies used for primary and secondary detection for both IFM and western blot analysis	57
Table 2.7: Suppliers of chemicals, reagents and equipment	62
Table 3.1: Frequency of acentral and midcell Z rings in live cells of <i>dna-1</i> (strain SU624) and <i>dnaF133</i> (strain SU625) and the relative position of midcell Z rings to the nucleoid.	77
Table 3.2: Frequency of acentral and midcell Z rings and the relative position of midcell Z rings to the nucleoid in thymineless and +HPUra conditions during spore outgrowth.	84
Table 3.3: Frequency of acentral and midcell Z rings and the relative position of midcell Z rings to the nucleoid in <i>dna-1</i> mutant at the non-permissive temperature and +HPUra condition.....	92
Table 5.1: Frequency of cells with two separated nucleoids, and internucleoid distances, in SU650 (<i>P_{spac}-ftsZ ΔrecA</i>) and SU651 (<i>P_{spac}-ftsZ ΔminCD ΔrecA</i>) after HPUra (100 μM) addition at 150 min of spore outgrowth.	157
Table 5.2: Z ring frequencies at the 210 and 240 min of the experimental approach. ^a	161
Table 5.3: Genetic transformations to obtain strains required for experimental approach II ^a	168
Table 5.4: Frequency of cells with two separated nucleoids and internucleoid distances, at 135 min of spore outgrowth (30 min after the shift to the non-permissive temperature).....	169
Table 5.5: Z ring location in cells with two separated nucleoids and a single Z ring at the 165 min time point of the experimental approach	173

Publications

Journal article

S. Moriya[^], R. Rashid[^], **C.D. Andrade Rodrigues[^]** and E.J. Harry (2010) Influence of the nucleoid and the early stages of DNA replication on positioning the division site in *Bacillus subtilis*. *Molecular Microbiology* 76: 634-47

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C.D. Andrade Rodrigues and E. J. Harry - November, 2010 - Bacterial Cell Biology Meeting - Cancun, Mexico - **Oral presentation** - “The Min system and nucleoid occlusion do not identify the division site in *Bacillus subtilis*; they regulate its utilization”

C.D. Andrade Rodrigues and E. J. Harry - July, 2010 - Australian Society for Microbiology Meeting- Sydney, Australia - **Poster Presentation** - “How bacteria identify their middle: challenging a paradigm”

C.D. Andrade Rodrigues, S. Moriya, R. Rashid, and E. J. Harry - September, 2009 – Gram-Positive Bacteria Meeting - Kobe, Japan - **Invited speaker** - “Evidence of a Noc-independent mechanism linking DNA replication to cell division in *Bacillus subtilis*”

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R. Rashid, S. Moriya, C. D. Andrade Rodrigues and E. J. Harry – July, 2007 - Australian Society for Microbiology Meeting - Melbourne, Australia - **Poster presentation** - “Coordination between proper Z ring placement and DNA replication in *B. subtilis*”

^a The presenting author is underlined.

Abbreviations

A	adenine
Aa	amino acid
Ab	antibody
AGRF	Australian Research Genome Facility
ATM	atomic force microscopy
<i>B.</i>	<i>Bacillus</i>
β	beta
bp	base pair(s)
BP	band pass
BSA	bovine serum albumin
C	cytosine
<i>cat</i>	chloramphenicol resistance gene
CCD	charged coupled device
DAPI	4'6-diamidino-2-phenylindole
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
dsDNA	double stranded deoxyribonucleic acid
<i>E.</i>	<i>Escherichia</i>
ECT	electron cryotomography
ECL	enhanced chemiluminescence
<i>et al.</i>	and others
<i>ermC</i>	erythromycin resistance gene
FRAP	fluorescence recovery after photobleaching
<i>fts</i>	filamentation temperature-sensitive
G	guanine
<i>g</i>	centrifugal force
<i>g</i>	gram (s)
GFP	green fluorescent protein
GMD	germination medium defined
h	hour(s)
HPUra	6-(-p-hydroxyphenylazo)-uracil

IFM	immunofluorescence microscopy
Ig	Immunoglobulin
IPTG	isopropyl-1-thio- β -D-galactopyranoside
kD	kilo Dalton(s)
L	litre(s)
LP	long pass
m	milli (10^{-3})
M	moles per litre
min	minute(s)
MQW	Milli-Q purified water
MSA	mineral salts A
MTS	membrane targeting sequence
n	nano (10^{-9})
NA	numerical aperture
N/A	not applicable
NBS	Noc-binding sites
<i>neo</i>	neomycin resistance gene
OD _x	optical density at (x refers to the wavelength in nm)
p	probability
<i>P_{spac}</i>	IPTG-inducible promoter
<i>P_{spachy}</i>	IPTG-hyper-inducible promoter
<i>P_{xyI}</i>	xylose-inducible promoter
PAGE	polyacrylamide gel electrophoresis
PBS	phosphate buffered saline
PCR	polymerase chain reaction
PDS	potential division sites
pH	power of Hydrogen
<i>phleo</i>	phleomycin resistance gene
RNase	ribonuclease A
ROR	round of replication
ROW	reverse osmosis purified water
rpm	revolutions per minute

RT	room temperature
<i>S.</i>	<i>Streptomyces</i>
sec	second(s)
SDS	sodium dodecyl sulfate
SEM	standard error of the mean
SMC	structural maintenance of chromosome
SMM	spizizen minimal medium
<i>spp.</i>	species
<i>spc</i>	spectinomycin resistance gene
T	thymine
TBAB	tryptose blood agar base
<i>tet</i>	tetracycline resistance gene
<i>thy</i>	thymine auxotroph
Tris	tris(hydroxymethyl)methylamine
Trp	L-Tryptophan
ts	temperature sensitive
U	units (enzyme activity)
UV	ultraviolet
V	volt(s)
v/v	volume per volume
W	watt
w/v	weight per volume
YFP	yellow fluorescent protein
μ	micro- (10 ⁻⁶)

Abstract

In virtually all bacteria cell division is essential and tightly regulated both temporally and spatially to ensure that cells divide precisely at the centre between segregated chromosomes. Failure to do so can lead to cell death. The earliest event in bacterial cell division is the polymerization of the highly conserved tubulin-like protein, FtsZ, to form a contractile structure called the Z ring, on the inner side of the cytoplasmic membrane at midcell and between chromosomes. The Z ring subsequently contracts causing the cell envelope to invaginate, generating two newborn cells. Thus the Z ring defines the position of the division site in bacterial cells.

How the Z ring is positioned precisely at midcell is a controversial topic that remains unresolved. Division site positioning has long been believed to occur via the combined action of two factors: the Min system and nucleoid occlusion. Both factors have been proposed to prevent Z ring assembly along the length of the cell, allowing it to assemble only once chromosomes segregate and nucleoid occlusion is relieved specifically at midcell. The research described in this thesis challenges this paradigm, providing compelling evidence that other mechanisms in addition to nucleoid occlusion and the Min system act to position the Z ring at midcell in *B. subtilis*. Moreover, this work also shows that nucleoid occlusion and the Min system do not define the Z ring position at midcell but rather ensure that the midcell division site is utilized efficiently.

A clue to an additional mechanism for positioning the Z ring has emerged from studies investigating the relationship between chromosome replication and Z ring position. The nature of this relationship has remained obscure for years. Part of this thesis involves a closer examination of this relationship. It was found that the ability to position the Z ring at midcell is linked specifically to the progress of the initiation stage of DNA replication, such that the frequency of Z rings at midcell increases as this stage of DNA replication is progressively completed. Moreover, this link was found to be nucleoid occlusion independent.

Spatial and temporal control of Z ring assembly has been widely attributed to the Min system and nucleoid occlusion. While inactivating both systems substantially affects

cell division, it is currently unknown whether their absence affects precise midcell Z ring positioning. This thesis deals with this question, and it was found that the combined effect of MinCD and Noc proteins actually affects the timing and efficiency of Z ring assembly, but not its spatial precision between nucleoids at midcell.

If Noc and MinCD proteins do not position the Z ring at midcell, what other factors may play this role? Two hypotheses were proposed to help explain the precise Z ring positioning observed in absence of *noc* and *minCD*: 1) Noc-independent nucleoid occlusion or 2) factors completely independent of nucleoid occlusion position the Z ring at midcell. Experiments designed to discriminate between these hypotheses showed that they are actually both valid: while the data obtained suggests that factors completely independent of nucleoid occlusion (Noc inclusive) and the Min system position the Z ring at midcell, it also suggested that other Noc-independent nucleoid occlusion factors prevent the Z ring from assembling at midcell over unreplicated DNA.